

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 26, 2009

The Honorable Nancy A. Nord
Acting Chairman
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
4330 East-West Highway
Bethesda, MD 20814

Dear Chairman Nord:

We are writing to request that the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) use its authority to prohibit the sale, import, or manufacture of novelty lighters by classifying them as a banned hazardous substance. During the 110th Congress and again this year, we have introduced legislation to establish a federal ban on novelty lighters. Novelty lighters are cigarette lighters designed to look like toys and other common household items. These designs are needlessly attractive to young children and, as such, pose a serious danger to their safety. Our legislation would require CPSC to treat novelty lighters as a banned hazardous substance. This bill is a decisive measure to keep these dangerous lighters out of the hands of children.

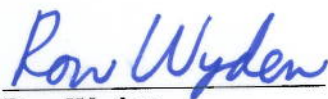
Novelty lighters encourage children to literally play with fire because they are indistinguishable from other children's toys. Allowing these lighters to remain on the market is, quite simply, an accident waiting to happen. Tragically, such accidents have already occurred too many times. In Oregon, a six-year-old boy died and another now has permanent brain damage after accidentally starting a fire with a novelty lighter shaped like a toy dolphin. In Arkansas, two young children were killed in a fire they accidentally started playing with a novelty lighter shaped like a motorcycle. And in Maine, a six-year-old boy suffered facial burns from playing with a lighter shaped like a miniature baseball bat during a visit to a local grocery store.

Horrific accidents like these can be avoided, without waiting for Congress to enact the ban we proposed in our legislation. We urge the CPSC to undertake a rulemaking process that would lead to regulatory bans on these dangerous lighters. The CPSC already has the authority to institute such a ban, and we encourage you to exercise that authority expeditiously.

A federal ban on novelty lighters has broad national support. The National Association of State Fire Marshals has made banning these dangerous toy-like lighters a top priority. The ban is also supported by the Congressional Fire Services Institute, the National Volunteer Fire Council, the cigarette lighter industry represented by the Lighter Association, and safety and consumer groups such as Safe Kids USA.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. For more information please contact Joel Shapiro with Senator Wyden at joel_shapiro@wyden.senate.gov, or Adam Killian with Senator Collins at adam_killian@hsgac.senate.gov.

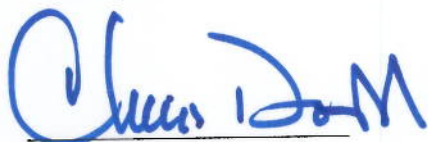
Sincerely,



Ron Wyden



Susan M. Collins



Chris Dodd



Thomas Carper



Jeff Merkley